

3-year sentence for hate crime vs. Sikh cab driver

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Seattle Pi

SEATTLE (AP) — A man who attacked a turban-wearing Sikh cab driver was sentenced Tuesday in Seattle to more than three years in prison for a federal hate crime.

Prosecutors had asked for a four-year sentence for [Jamie W. Larson](#), 50, of Federal Way, and his defense lawyer had recommended a 2 1/2-year term. He got 40 months.

Larson pleaded guilty in June and in a hand-written apology said he was in an alcohol blackout in October 2012 when he beat the driver while shouting anti-Muslim slurs. The driver is an immigrant from India and not a Muslim.

Larson was originally charged with malicious harassment in King County Superior Court, but the case was turned over to federal prosecutors because the federal hate crime law carries a longer possible sentence — up to 10 years.

Auburn police called the cab after officers found Larson drunk and sitting in shrubbery near a store, according to court records.

After arriving at a Federal Way address, Larson first refused to get out of the car. A resident of the home, where Larson was not welcome, was speaking with the driver when Larson attacked him from behind.

Larson grabbed the driver's beard, pulled him to the ground and hit and kicked him in the head and body while shouting slurs and insults about Arabs, Persians and Muslims and complaining about immigrants "taking all our jobs."

Larson continued the slurs even after police arrived. Larson also used an anti-gay slur, according to court papers.

The driver spent eight days in a hospital and missed two months of work, the seattlepi.com reported Monday (<http://bit.ly/1kwhRpB>).

Larson was prosecuted under the law that outlaws violence motivated by a person's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability.

The case was investigated by the FBI and prosecuted by the U.S. attorney's office for the Western District of Washington with help from the [Justice Department's Civil Rights Division](#).